their dignity. They were compelled to accept gratuities, which discredited their profession in the eyes of a public that was not always able to distinguish between gratuities and bribes.

"The best brains in the service," Lissevich reported, "have decided that something must be done to raise our salaries. But we do not know how to begin. Should we organize a union or elect a Soviet or present a petition to the general? This is why we called this meeting. Now, gentlemen-strangers, we want your advice."

I replied that police officers, like any other group of private or public employees, had a right to organize. "Unions of police officers exist in Europe. Why not set up one in St. Petersburg?"

The meeting drank to my health, and Lissevich continued. The police officers had other grievances, too. They wanted changes in their uniform (to make it like that of army officers), promotion according to seniority, election of superior officers by all respectable members of the force, and so on. I wrote down their demands and offered to draft an appeal to all members of the police force to join the union.

The man at the head of the table got up, approached me, and whispered in my ear, "Go ahead. They are smarter than they look. Add a preamble about the role of the police in a democratic state." His eyes were twinkling, and it was obvious that he was a white crow in the police department.

I followed his advice and offered still another plank for the platform—that the police of the capital should be controlled by the democratically elected Municipal Council and freed of political functions, such as search, seizure, and arrests.

The resolution was accepted unanimously as the platform of the new union and the basis for a petition to the general—that is, to Trepov, whose name, out of respect for him, was never mentioned. The occasion called for a celebration. At a wink from Safronov, the empty bottles were replaced by a new array, and the meeting ended in a most friendly spirit. In fact, except for the presiding officer and me, the group was so drunk that, just to please us, they would have signed anything.

With Nikolai in tow, I left the founders of the new union to discuss their problems among themselves and went to the University. When I got home after midnight my mother met me with alarm. "Two police officers have been asking for you." "Order of arrest?" "No, but they looked frightened when they could not find you and waited for you for some time. Then they went away, leaving a note for you."

I opened the envelope. The message was written on a form for collecting fees for dog tags. It said: "Mr. Stranger. For the Lord's